

GUIDE

TO

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

ON PREPARATION FOR OCCASIONS OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

It is the duty of every one who participates in occasions of religious worship to appear there with a right heart; with a heart reverential, meek, impartial before God, desirous to do his will, and fully confiding in him. And especially is it necessary that the heart should be right relatively to the *occasion*, inasmuch as every occasion seems to require its specific and appropriate exercises of mind. And accordingly it is a question practically of great moment, What is the best method of making the requisite preparation? In what manner, and in the fulfilment of what conditions, can we most certainly attend upon occasions of religious worship, with feelings entirely appropriate to such occasions?

Different answers will perhaps be given to this question by different persons. But the course which many persons of sound Christian experience have found very profitable, is indicated in the following direction, viz.: Cease inwardly from all self-originated spiritual action, and let the soul remain perfectly quiet and resigned before God, to receive from Him those impressions and suggestions of the Holy Spirit which he may see fit to give. In the language which God, on a certain important occasion, addressed to his afflicted people, 2 Chron. xx: 15, 17, "The battle is not yours, but the Lord's. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves; stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you." Cease from self and from the agitations which are consequent upon the life of self, which seems to be the only thing that excludes the favor and indwelling of God from the heart, and He will take up his residence there, and will infallibly accomplish his own blessed work.

Some will perhaps object to this practical religious rule, that it may tend to produce a careless and stupid state. There is no doubt that it is liable to be

misunderstood and misapplied. But this is a liability which attends almost all spiritual directions whatever. But perhaps the danger will be regarded as less imminent, when we add, further, that the direction which has been given cannot be carried practically into effect, and cannot secure the blessedness which it is calculated to impart, except in connection with certain circumstances, and in the fulfilment of certain conditions.

FIRST.—And accordingly we remark, in the first place, that God will not visit us and take the guidance of our spiritual affections, in the manner which has been mentioned, without an entire and irrevocable consecration of body and spirit antecedently made. The soul that is not fully consecrated to God, to desire and to do his will and his will only, can never experience true spiritual rest, and therefore is not in the true position for the divine operation to take effect upon it. The individual who is not fully consecrated to God, necessarily commits sin; and he does it knowingly and deliberately. He may be the subject of divine grace, to some extent; but he is, nevertheless, in a greater or less degree, in the life of self, and out of the life of God. Consequently being in a state of greater or less rebellion against God, and knowing himself to be so, he cannot fail to experience a greater or less degree of internal rebuke and agitation. This is an infallible issue. And it is on this ground, therefore, that we assert, in all such cases, the absence of that inward spiritual rest, which, whenever it exists, is always and unfailingly attended with the divine presence and operation. The law of the divine operation, therefore, which results in the origination of religious feelings appropriate to the present occasion, whatever it may be, cannot take effect, except in souls that are sincerely, entirely, and for ever consecrated to God. And we may add here, that this view seems to us adequately to meet the objection, that the doctrine under consideration tends to a carelessness and stupidity of mind.

SECOND.—Another consideration which is necessary, in order to realize effectually the benefit of the important rule which has been laid down, is this. While we lay ourselves, body and spirit, on God's altar, with entire meekness and resignation of mind, and with a sincere desire to receive from Him those enlightening and guiding influences, and those *only*, which he sees best for us, we must at the same time fully believe that He will grant our request, and that, in accordance with our request, He does at the present time operate upon us and in us, in his own good way. Whatever other preparation of the soul there may be, there will be no divine communication upon it, and cannot be, without faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We must, therefore, *believe in God*, that if the soul is placed before Him in a state of entire impartiality and resignation, or what is essentially the same thing, in a state of entire freedom from the disturbing influences of self, and is at the same time sincerely desirous to be led by Him, *He will and does lead it*. This important principle is in accordance with the passage in the eleventh chapter of Mark, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye

shall have them." And this principle must be resolutely and completely carried into effect. That is to say, we must firmly and fully believe that the feelings we have, however trying and painful they may sometimes be, are from God, unless we have reason to think they are sinful feelings, which we know can never come from Him. But we must hold it certain that sinful feelings can never exist under such circumstances, without some defect either in the act of consecration or the act of faith. On the supposition that the consecration and the faith remain firm, there is no reason to distrust the result which has been indicated.

If, for instance, you find your mind in a state of aridity or dryness, which is often a very trying state to be in, (in other words, with little or no sensible and pleasurable excitation of feeling,) receive that as the very state of mind which God, under the existing circumstances, sees best for you. Be careful to give no place to the temptations of Satan, who will try, by exciting fear and unbelief, to discourage, dishearten and distress you in this particular state of feeling. Continue to remain meek, quiet and entirely resigned before God: being fully confident that the Holy Spirit is operative, although not precisely in the way which human wisdom, in its imperfection, would have been likely to prescribe. To be submissive at such times, is *to be* under the divine operation. What more excellent and glorious operation of the Spirit, than that of keeping the mind in a state of subdued and thankful submission and quietude in the trying state of interior destitution! Perhaps it is worth much more to us, worth much more in the sight of God, than that different and more excited state of mind, which is in general so highly valued.

THIRD.—In connection with the two conditions which have been mentioned, the one of consecration and the other of faith, we may properly apply the rule which has been laid down as a good one in making preparation for occasions of religious worship; and perhaps we may say, if rightly understood, a good one on all occasions and at all times, viz.:—Cease from all internal action which originates in the life of self; and in the exercise of religious faith let the soul remain perfectly quiet and resigned before God, to receive from Him those impressions and suggestions of the Holy Spirit which He may see fit to give. If we are faithful in thus waiting in all simplicity upon God, the results will be found to be exceedingly satisfactory to every Christian who is capable of forming a true estimate of the work of God in the soul. If in the view of God, who takes all the circumstances into consideration, the occasion has arrived which calls for especial sympathy and feeling in the behalf of sinners, He will give us those feelings. Or He will give us, under other circumstances, and in the exercise of his own infinite wisdom and discretion, other feelings, having especial reference to himself perhaps, or it may be to our own case; special feelings, for instance, of adoration, of love, of humility, of penitence, of gratitude. He will give us, in a single word, just those feelings which he sees best at the time, although they may not be in precise accordance with our preconceived anticipations.

Or perhaps he will see best, acting in reference to our own good, to withhold from us, for a time, all feelings which are very distinct and specific. And the offering from our hearts which we thus render, whether it be characterized by specific feelings or by a humble submission in the want of specific feelings, as it will be the result of his own inspiration, cannot fail to be acceptable.

1. In view of this subject a number of remarks may properly be made. And one is, that there cannot be a consistent system of holy living, except on the ground of entire consecration and of perfect faith. These great first principles will lay the foundation for every thing else in its proper place.

2. The doctrine which has been laid down strikes directly at the life of nature. A man may be willing to trust God outwardly, (that is to say, for his health, food, raiment, and other things of an outward nature,) and, at the same time, may not be willing to trust him for his inward exercises. To trust God with entire reliance for our *spiritual* bread, implies a greater degree of self-crucifixion, than to trust him for our temporal bread.

3. This view, in accordance with the scripture direction, "STRIVE to enter in," implies a state of earnest desire and prayer. It is very far from being a dull or stupid state. What soul gives better evidence of earnestly desiring, and even "*agonizing*" to do the will of God, than that which resolutely crucifies all the suggestions of nature and all the movements of self, in order that God may accomplish his own will, and may truly take up his abode in the soul as "the one all in all."

4. This view is favorable to consistency of Christian life. It is the true preventive of the alternating system in religious experience, the system of elevations and depressions, of "ups and downs," as it is sometimes familiarly called. Whether we are on the mount of inward joy, or in the furnace of inward affliction, we can always say, "It is all well," because we know that the will of God is accomplished in us.

5. We observe in conclusion, that the view which has been given tends to glorify God. "The husbandman," says Molinos in his *Spiritual Guide*, "sets a greater esteem upon the plants which he sows in the ground, than those that spring up of themselves, because they never come to seasonable maturity. In the same manner God esteems and is better pleased with the virtue which he sows and infuses into the soul, (as being sunk into its own nothingness, calm and quiet, retreated within its own centre, and without any election,) than all the other virtues which the soul pretends to acquire by its own election and endeavors."* In order to rectify human nature, and to make us what we should be, we must go out of, and above human nature, even to God himself manifested in Christ, the great Sower of the true *Spiritual* seed. "*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in God is thy help.*"

X. Y.

* *Spiritual Guide* of Michael de Molinos, Chap. VI.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

LETTER FROM REV. T. BAINBRIDGE.

DEAR BROTHER KING,—For some time past, I have read your “Guide to Christian Perfection” with deep interest and much profit, and I think it scarcely possible for any sincere inquirer after truth to read the Scriptural views there so clearly stated, together with the personal experience of pious individuals, with any degree of attention, and especially with a devotional spirit, without being at once both instructed, edified and stimulated to holy conduct; and whatever tends in any degree to promote our spiritual improvement is certainly above all price. I have been especially interested with the experience of P. L. U. Several points in that experience arrested my serious attention, which it may be instructive to notice.

First. The barren state of mind in which she lived for many years.—It is thus described: “I lived in a state of daily condemnation, and I never indulged a hope of living above this state.” This, alas! we have too much reason to fear is the sad experience of thousands of professing Christians at the present day, who for want of being urged forward into the enjoyment of their Christian privileges, continue in a state of darkness and uncertainty, often expressing their feelings in the mournful language of the poet, “Am I his, or am I not,” and thus remain in the “Slough of despond” all their days, without ever making one vigorous effort to ascend the “hill of difficulty,” to catch a believing view of the Savior, and like Bunyan’s pilgrim, leave their burden in the sepulchre of Jesus, and like him, go on their way rejoicing. Many professors of religion have made the seventh chapter to the Romans (where St. Paul is evidently describing a state of bondage) a standard for their Christian experience, and lose sight of the eighth chapter, where the apostle clearly describes a state the very opposite of that in the seventh, and no one surely can be in a state of bondage and in a state of liberty at one and the same time. I remember the Rev. William Dawson (who was one of the most remarkable men of his day for his bold and original thoughts) once preaching from I think the second verse of the eighth chapter of Romans, “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me *free* from the law of sin and death,” and in a way peculiar to himself made the following remarks. “There are many professors who are continually poring over the seventh chapter to the Romans, and

think it a mark of humility to be expressing their barren state of mind in the language of St. Paul, 'I am carnal, sold under sin; O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death;' and here they remain, rather than be at the trouble of seeking the scriptural way of deliverance from this body of death. Now to-day," said he, "I am going to try to get you out of the seventh chapter into the eighth—from a state of captivity into a state of freedom." Dr. Clarke's note on the above text is very instructive, and merits universal attention.

"Rom. viii. 2. *For the law of the spirit of life.*] The gospel of the grace of Christ, which is not only a law or rule of life, but affords that sovereign *energy* by which guilt is removed from the conscience, the power of sin broken, and its polluting influence removed from the heart. The law was a *spirit of death*, by which those who were under it were bound down, because of their sin, to condemnation and death. The gospel proclaims Jesus the Savior: and what the *law* bound unto death, it looses unto life eternal. And thus the apostle says, whether of *himself* or the man whom he is still personating, *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* Most people allow that St. Paul is here speaking of his *own state*; and this state is so totally different from that described in the preceding chapter, that it is absolutely impossible that they should have been the state of the same being, at *one* and the *same time*. No creature could possibly be *carnal, sold under sin, brought into captivity to the law of sin and death*; and at the same time be *made free from that law of sin and death, by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus!* Until the most palpable absurdities and contradictions can be reconciled, these two opposite states can never exist in the same person at the same time."

Dr. Chalmers, also, though holding different sentiments to Dr. Clarke on many points, has expressed himself nearly to the same effect on the same text, in his Lectures on Romans, and I think some of his reasoning will suit the "Guide." It is as follows:—

"You are already aware how it is the Spirit of God that infuses this principle into the mind, and sets agoing the law of its operation. Hence it may be properly denominated the law of the Spirit, even as the opposite process against which it has to struggle and at length to *vanquish*, is called the law of sin—a new tendency imparted to the soul for the purpose of arresting the old tendency, and at length of extinguishing it, and called the law of the Spirit, just because referable to the Holy Ghost,

by whose agency it is that the new affection has been inspired, that the new moral force has been made to actuate the soul and give another direction than before to the whole history." p. 237.

In all our preaching and writing we ought to imitate Mr. Dawson in trying to get our hearers into the eighth chapter of Romans, which some of the old Puritans used to call their "flower garden," in which they delighted to wander and regale themselves with its sweets; and one of them after he became blind, had his daughter read this interesting chapter to him daily, and when dying, requested her to place his fingers on the 38th and 39th verses, fully assured that death would not separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The next point in the experience of P. L. U. that arrested my attention was the course pursued, and the struggle made in passing from a state of bondage into a state of Christian liberty. This I think must be instructive to all who sincerely desire to know the "truth that makes us free." Her own account is as follows: — "I came to the word of God with a determination to lay aside my former creed — to forget the experience of those dear servants of Christ I had long known and loved, and understand for myself what the salvation of the Gospel was." This would require no small effort of mind, for early impressions are deep and lasting, and we feel their influence all through life. In reading the history of individuals, as well as of nations, we are often struck with those small incidents which bring about the most important results. The circumstance of that pious female relating her experience in meeting a where P. L. U. was present, is one of those incidents. Little did that individual suppose, when she spoke in all the simplicity of her heart, that what she said would act so powerfully upon a highly cultivated mind, and that that mind would act upon another highly cultivated mind; and how far all this may have contributed, directly or indirectly, towards producing that excellent book, "The Interior Life," by Rev. T. C. U., we know not; but this we know, that the book will be read by thousands, (to whom we trust it will prove an unspeakable blessing,) who would never read any thing written by Mr. Wesley, or Fletcher, on the same subject, without some prejudice, either against those authors or the phrases they use. The terms "perfection," being "sanctified wholly," &c., are terms considered by our good brethren of other denominations, as peculiarly Wesleyan, forgetting that they are Scriptural phrases, and must mean something. However we will not contend about phrases, while we are aiming at the same thing, namely, "holiness of heart and life." Call it the "Interior Life," or, with

Chalmers, the "moral force" within, that is to accomplish the destruction of sin, or what else they please, we will rejoice in the progress of the work itself. I remember one of our presiding elders once relating a circumstance in his sermon, with which the whole congregation was highly interested; it was in substance as follows:—A preacher, at one of his appointments on his circuit had preached a sermon on Christian perfection; it was made a subject of much conversation, and no doubt much misrepresented, and the preacher gave notice, that at such a time he would preach again on the same subject. A good brother of another denomination, believing the preacher to be in great error, resolved to oppose him publicly at the meeting. When the time came, this good brother, for such he was, began to think that what he was going to do, in opposing the preacher, ought to be done in a Christian spirit, and retired into secret to pray that the Lord would give him grace—to enable him to act the part of a Christian in this matter, while thus engaged. It pleased the Almighty to visit his servant with a very special manifestation of his presence. The good man thought, If the Lord has done so much for me in answer to prayer, He can do still more, and I will try Him again. He again retired. While praying he became very happy, and at length ventured to pray that the Lord would give him as *much religion* as it was his privilege to enjoy while in the body; his fervor and his faith increased with the exercise, till he became filled unutterably full of glory and of God. He felt nothing in his heart contrary to love—love to God and all mankind. In this happy state of mind he went to meeting, and heard the preacher explain what he meant by "Christian perfection"—"that it was neither more nor less than loving God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves." The good man felt the explanation to agree with his own experience, and instead of opposing the doctrine, said, If that be Christian perfection, thank God I enjoy it. And he continued to be a happy witness of it many years.

Those, then, who do not like the terms perfection, &c., &c., may, at any rate, imitate this good man, and venture to pray for as much *religion* as it is their privilege to enjoy while in the body.

T. B.

Hillsdale, March, 1844.

Weeping must quicken praying, and not deaden it.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

EVERY DAY EXPERIENCE.

(Continued.)

May.—A sweet peace of mind have I enjoyed this month, calm, delightful, and almost uninterrupted. Have suffered in two instances, being tempted; realized who Satan was. Was in an agony for a few moments, lost in the thoughts that were pressing upon me—I had sinned. Prayed earnestly to God, and soon found peace and joy restored to my bleeding bosom. To sin against Him whom my soul ardently loves, how can I endure it? Have been enabled to visit from house to house, particularly amongst the poor. I find the precious word more and more precious to my soul; I live upon it, even as my body is sustained by food. I find here a table spread which more than meets all my wants. It seems to me that only *one* promise of the true and faithful God would be enough, would satisfy me; but how *many* do I find.

Have an abiding sense of God's presence, and at times my heart seems not only filled, but to overflow with the love of God. No clouds nor darkness overshadow my path; my faith receives no check; it seems fixed immovably on God. Have felt a strong desire to declare publicly, yea, to all the world, could my voice be heard, what a Savior I have found; one that makes *whole*; but am hindered. I mourn as a child who so loves he fears to grieve his parent; as one whose heart is full, and yet is forbidden to speak. Was greatly comforted, in this strife of feeling, between love and fear, as I opened to and read again and again, 1 Peter, iv. 1: "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm *yourselves likewise with the same mind.*" O what sustaining power did I find in this chapter. Verily I went in the strength of that meat many days. O Lord, thou knowest I desire only to do thy will. Let me but know thy will, and it is done, if all the world despise me. I sacrifice nothing when I give up all the world to Thee.

May 25.—After much deliberation, and many weeks of prayerful study of God's Word with reference to this duty, was led this evening at a public prayer meeting to declare the *greatness* of the salvation I had experienced. Now, Lord, have I sacrificed all to Thee; a willing sacrifice thou knowest. Be Thou still my God, and joyfully will I bear reproach and shame.

June 20.—My peace this month has been abundant; like the river, ever flowing. And my joy at times has risen high, even as the swollen river, overflowing its banks. New sources of joy arise in my contemplations of God, and God alone is the object on which my mind rests. It seems a waste of thought to dwell upon myself, on my past sins. God's forgiveness seems

so complete, my sins so blotted out, as if no more remembered, that I cannot name them. My poor famished soul, so long oppressed in darkness and in sin, having found new wings on which to rise and soar, scarcely dares look back, but hastens on to know more and more of God. V. W.

(To be Continued.)

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

EVIDENCES OF ADVANCEMENT IN HOLINESS.

IN conversing with those of like profession with myself, I have frequently found such as were inquiring with much sincerity what was their real state in grace as to advancement. The novelty of the transition from their former state of frequent doubting and darkness to that of continual "light in the Lord" having passed away, they seemed to be at a loss to decide upon what points they should fix the attention, to learn their spiritual position. It seems to me that we need not be in doubt as to our progress in piety. We ought to be actually advancing, and we ought to know it. It is very plain that he who continually renders his all into the hands of God, should expect a much more rapid approximation to his Sanctifier now, while his entire life, with all its affairs, is consecrated to Him, than ever before while he was in that state where a great reserve was made for the gratification of selfishness. And it is true without variation, that he who lives in a state of entire sanctification, is, by one process or another, continually searching his own heart, and inspecting his own life, to the minutiae of it, to see if he is walking by the same rule, and minding the same things that were delivered him upon his first entering that state. The points which I am about to notice are some of those upon which I am accustomed to exercise my own heart. If I am growing into closer and closer union with the Father through a constantly increasing faith in his Son, and if I am more and more under the influence of the Holy Spirit, I have as an evidence, (comparing the present with the past,)

1st. *Greater simplicity of thought concerning God, and purer simplicity of feeling toward Him.* By this I mean that I am less inclined to look to God through a cloud of misty thought, by which his glorious image is obscured and distorted. I am learning more perfectly to see Him as He is, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-wise, a God of love. My soul is saying to it-

self more and more emphatically, "Be thou in perfect peace at all times, for thy God is almighty; He is always near thee; He knows every thing concerning thee, and His love bequeaths to thee every benefit, temporal and eternal." Thus may we come to God like Moses, with the simple petition, "I beseech thee show me thy glory," just such a phase of it as shall best fit me to do thy will, with the perfect expectation of an answer in due time; in other words, receiving the answer *now, by faith*.

2d. *Greater comfort in the Holy Scriptures.* This comfort increases as the mind learns, by watching its own operations before God, how much poor, bewildered man needs a polar star, just such a one as the Bible is, and finds this want completely supplied. The soul is perceiving, too, more clearly, the application of different expressions of Scripture to its different states; the Holy Ghost, its Author, explaining and applying it as the heart expands itself to receive His influences.

3d. *Greater readiness to enter into the "second degree of prayer."* The spirit of prayer is possessed in different degrees at different times. At one time, or in one stage of Christian experience, prayer consists in presenting petitions, with little more than a mere hope that they will be answered. In an advanced degree of communion with God, the soul and all its faculties are absorbed as it draws near the mercy seat, and the Divine glory holds the eye of the suppliant until all thoughts of places and things, life and death, are forgotten; and adoration, accompanied with sighings for the further perfection of Christ's image upon the heart, occupies a space of time unnoticed; while faith takes possession of the blessings it asks, and for them offers praises.

4th. *Greater desire for the holiness of others.* When drawing nearer the fountain of life, we are seeing more plainly the fulness of the provision made for dying beings; how freely the living waters flow to thirsty souls! how plentifully the living bread is broken to those that hunger! Our hearts are exercised with vehement desires, that all who are famishing may come and have a ready supply. When coming into nearer union with God, we are learning more concerning the immortal nature of man, so that its entire redemption, present and future, appears of greater and greater importance.

5th. *A more heart searching sense of the value of time.* As we enter more deeply into spiritual interests, the connection of the present life with an everlasting state rests upon our minds with greater impression; and what may be done by using the means within reach for the promotion of good and insurance of

salvation, both as concerns ourselves and the world around us, increases in weight of import, so that we are prompted to grasp our moments as we would diamonds.

6th. *Less desire to hear, see and know, for mere curiosity's sake.* As the soul becomes more closely united to its God, it is more perfectly satisfied with the gracious influences that He imparts, for entertainment as well as comfort; and an unwillingness to be pre-occupied with unnecessary things is sure to characterize deeply devoted Christians; hence it is that they are always inquiring for the *utility* of the object before interesting themselves in it. They wish always to do to the most valuable purpose.

7th. *A greater inclination to deem the disappointments and hardships of life worthy of no complaint.* When looking almost entirely at earthly things, they assume a considerable magnitude in our view, so that success in them is likely to elate us, and disappointments depress us. It is then that we are ready to deplore losses and complain of hardship. But the soul, occupied with heavenly interests, has its eye filled with spiritual things; so that those which are temporal affect him but little. He has but little to say of this deprivation, or that suffering; for with him they are not worthy to be compared, not only to the glory that is to be revealed in future, but to the blessedness that already is his portion. Where Christ and the Father have taken up their abode, selfish grievances are not known, and the common sufferings of humanity are greatly abated.

8th. *Greater deliberation of thought, carefulness of action, rectitude of feeling, and wariness of speech.* The consecrated one, enjoying deep communion with his Maker, feels an increasing desire to employ all his faculties in that manner which his Father, God, will most sweetly approve. He therefore takes the means by which he is most likely to be correct in the use of these powers. He thinks patiently and prayerfully, acts cautiously, always guarding and chastening his feelings as they utter themselves in speech. Again, the strong purpose felt by such as love all the traits of the Lord Jesus' blessed character with an increasing love, leads them to these very habits of carefulness; that they, like Him, may be "unrebukable" and "unreprovable," how much soever the multitude may accuse him.

9th. *Less inclined to magnify the faults, and make visible the weaknesses of others when obliged to speak of their characters.* We cannot suppose the Christian, "pure in heart," to be speaking *intentionally* to the disadvantage of his neighbor; but he is exposed, either from former habit or from some other

cause, to speak too openly and too freely of the short comings and faults of those concerning whom he may be giving some account. But as his character becomes more assimilated to that of his great example, Christ, he will be more careful, in every case, to speak of others precisely as he would have them speak of himself, were he in their circumstances. How searching is this rule! How lenient would we have others be to us, and how lenient should we be to them!

10th. *An increasing carefulness for the formation of proper habits of mind and body; those the least noticed as well as the most conspicuous.* While constantly seeking to have the operation of God upon us, to make us what we may be for usefulness and happiness, we find that there is much for us to do to cultivate ourselves, so that there shall be no improper habits about us, by which our spiritual progress is impeded, the happiness of others injured, or our usefulness to them prevented. Further than this, there is a clearness of perception acquired by living in constant intercourse with Him who is the Truth, so that the more we are in communion with Jesus, we realize more sensibly the influence of outward habits upon the heart, and thus are led to the closer inspection in these things.

11th. *A greater degree of gentleness and sweetness in deportment and conversation; "bearing all things, believing all things, and hoping all things."* We may speak of the "second degree" in the Christian graces, to distinguish the mere negative exercise of them from that fruitfulness of holy principle seen in natural Christians. He may be said to be gentle who refrains from the opposite of gentleness in his words and manners; but there is an advanced step which he may take, where all his words, looks and manners, whether toward children, servants, or companions, shall speak of love — forbearing love — approving love; and this not interfere at all with that firmness which the parent, teacher and business man are called to exercise in the administration of discipline, and the transaction of temporal affairs.

12th. *A greater readiness to speak freely upon the subject of religion, to both the professor and non-professor of it.* As the soul is enlarged by a familiarity with divine truth, and receives richer communications from the Holy Spirit, it becomes more delightful to speak to fellow heirs concerning the blessed inheritance. Mutual gratulation, where there is mutual joy, is but the fruit of one of nature's sweetest impulses. And when getting farther removed from selfish interests, we are more ready to risk a loss upon our own part, in hope of securing a greater gain to

our neighbor. By warning and entreating the thoughtless sinner, we may lose his good will, notwithstanding all our expression of love for his soul; but this the devoted disciple of Jesus is willing to risk, in view of the possibility of persuading his fellow men to accept the terms of salvation.

13th. *More disposed to glory in reproach for Christ's sake.* The greater devotion to a cause, or person, the greater willingness to suffer for it, or him. Reputation for its own sake, appears of but small import in the eye of him who looks at eternal things, to learn the value of temporal things. And if professing interest in any particular doctrine which he deems important to the perfection of Christ's image in his church, exposes him to reproach and ridicule, the true disciple welcomes it, rejoicing that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for his Master's name.

14th. *An increasing tenderness of conscience.* This is seen in a greater fear of sin; a carefulness to find the line of demarkation between the pleasure and displeasure of God, in the employments and enjoyments of life, from the least to the greatest.

15th. *Less affected by changes of place and circumstances.* He who lives the "interior life," is but little affected by external changes. God is every where, and he every where enjoys Him; so that all circumstances are alike to him, inasmuch as they are all overruled by his Father's hand.

16th. *A sweeter enjoyment of the holy Sabbath, and services of the sanctuary.* While the heart is expanding in love to the Father, the Son and the Spirit, whatever has been divinely appointed becomes more and more precious. And whatever has a tendency to refresh and invigorate the mind in holy thought, continually increases in value to him whose strongest aspirations are for a clear view of the things of God. And none of the ordinances of His house become a dull ceremony while the spiritual vision is clear, so that the substance is easily seen through the shadow.

17. *The desire to please God less mixed with other desires.* When one has but just entered upon the "first principles" of the Christian course, he is liable to be led astray by desires not placed simply upon the will of God. He imagines that a different state of *feeling* would be better for him; or that his *external* circumstances must be changed to favor his advancement in piety. It may be that he is correct in his judgment in these things, but he has no certainty of this; and as he learns more of his own fallibility, and of the faithfulness of his God, he sees the propriety, and feels the safety of centering all his desires to this one focus — "*Thy will be done.*"

This may be seen by observing the difference between the petitions that he now offers, and the prayers put up in his first experience in spiritual things. Where once he had many favors to ask—release from his trial, and preservation from that affliction—he now has but little to say of this thing or that, but, thrusting himself into the dust before the Supreme Lord, begs only to know his will, and to be strengthened to do and suffer it as shall best please Him.

In like manner are offered the supplications of

A STUDENT.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

DEAR BROTHER KING,—Feeling a deep interest in the cause of entire sanctification, with pleasure I forward to you the following interesting experience for publication, that others may be provoked to emulation, and become partakers of the like precious faith.

F. A. CRAFTS.

Bluehill, Me., Jan. 5, 1844.

I trust I was led by the spirit of God, when quite young, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to give my heart to God. Well do I remember the hour when, almost sinking beneath the burden of my sins, I knelt beneath the spreading branches of yonder solitary oak, where no eye but that of an holy God could behold me, as I cried for the first time, "God be merciful to me a sinner." O what sensations I then endured, while a life of rebellion against a merciful God stared me full in the face! My eyes I dared not raise to heaven; ashamed, guilty and confused, the gaze of a world could not have added to my mortification. During four days my distress continued to increase, although I attended constantly on the means of grace, when at length I was willing to give up *all* for Christ, to cast myself without the *least* reserve upon the mercy of God, and that moment I heard a voice saying, "Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace." O what peace then possessed my soul! *All* was calm and serene within; *all* was beautiful and lovely

around. For many weeks I felt like one just returned from a long absence from all who were dear, to a Father's house. Friends were dearer than ever. Prayer was indeed a repast to my soul. But alas! too soon the scene was changed. I was taught (as many still are) that I must not always expect to feel thus, and yielding to doubts and unbelief, the Spirit was grieved, the enemy entered my heart, and in darkness I groped my way ten tedious years; although conscious ever that I was not as God would gladly make me, and at times struggling to be free, with unspeakable intensity of desire. I inquired,

“Dear Jesus, when, when shall it be,
That I no more shall break with thee?
When will this war of passion cease,
And I enjoy a lasting peace.”

And panting after God I cried,

“I thirst for a life-giving God,
A God that on Calvary died;
A fountain of water and blood,
That gushed from Immanuel's side.”

I sighed for the bliss of loving God with all the heart — for the abiding witness of a Savior's love, though ignorant, or perhaps unbelieving of attainableness of sanctification. Thus vacillating from stupor to activity, from exertion to slothfulness, the precious moments sped away. One year since, my desires for holiness began to deepen, and for three months so intense was the contest, so burning my desires for entire conformity to the will of God, that nature began to falter, and doubtless had not a merciful High Priest, in answer to prayer, delivered my soul, ere this I should have entered the shades of the tomb. After listening to a discourse on the subject of perfect love, by Br. S. of B., I was fully convinced of my duty, and accordingly consecrated myself to God, while I uttered the language of the poet,

“Lord, I make a full surrender,
Every power and thought be thine;
Thine for ever.”

But so long had unbelief reigned in my soul, that still he presented the hostile front, and disputed the ground.

I said, “How can he accept the offering?” and in my distress inquired, “What shall I do?” Agreeably to advice, I went with a heavy heart to converse with brother S., if possible to gain some light on the way I ought to go. After making some inqui-

ries respecting my past and present state of mind, he said that it was unbelief that deprived me of the blessing, and presented many of the *precious promises* of God, such as—"I am with you alway;" "He will never leave thee nor forsake thee," &c.; and added, "They are for *you*; what more can you ask?" The last conflict was desperate, but faith seized the prize, and I replied, "Nothing: it is enough."

While being remains, I cannot forget that moment. So great was the change that brother S. discovered it in my countenance, and said, "There, you are on the Rock; stand there." Glory be to God! nine months have since passed, and still I am standing there, and while Jesus is my refuge, the powers of darkness may combine against me in vain!

My mind, which for years has been "like the troubled sea," in obedience to the sweet voice which said, "Peace, be still," now enjoys a constant calm. When the great work was wrought I did not feel all those raptures of which many speak, but a sweet sense of resting on Christ; like a drop in the ocean lost, I mingled in the tide of love divine, content to be "unknown; loved and prized by God alone."

While returning, the tempter suggested, "this is all a delusion;" and so fierce was the assault, that I was constrained to cry aloud, "*Get behind me, Satan; it is of the Lord; I do—I will believe.*" He left me, but to renew the attack under another garb. But throwing the arms of faith still closer around my Savior, I felt that I was safe.

"I hate the tempter and his charms;
I hate his flattering breath."

Praise the Lord for delivering grace! I am constantly enjoying such a sense of his presence, that should he call, I would willingly go and dwell with him. He is unspeakably precious to my soul, yea, "the one altogether lovely." I wish ever to act as if I saw him by my side. O how blessed to *live by faith*! I feel, even while I am writing, that I have a treasure in the skies—can repose with confidence in a *special providence*, and with the vision of faith penetrate the vista, death, where I discover the object of my hope, life everlasting, at Christ's right hand, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

W.

Serving God with our little is the way to make it more.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

CORRESPONDENCE OF A BAPTIST LADY.

MR. KING,—I send you another letter, from my Sister, for publication in your estimable periodical, which is blessed of God to the sanctification of his children.

A SUBSCRIBER.

MY VERY DEAR SISTER,—Do you not think there is much misunderstanding among Christians when speaking of Christian perfection, sanctification, perfect love, &c.? I know of no sentiment, advanced by the advocates for Christian perfection, to which I cannot heartily subscribe, and yet I can as heartily say, with others, that no attainments which we, in our own strength, can possibly make, deserve to be called perfection. It seems to me that the one is looking to what we are or may become *in ourselves*, the other to what Christ is to us, or what the feeblest Christian may become *in Christ*.

I believe that all true Christians are *called to be saints*, or *sanctified ones*, as it might have been rendered. That they are not only to live in the Spirit, but to walk in the Spirit; and that if they walk in the Spirit, they shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh—that in Christ we may find grace to help in every time of need—a full supply for every exigency of our being—in a word, that we are *complete in him*. But notwithstanding the rich provisions of grace, I believe it a lamentable fact, that many of God's own dear children know very little more of what God has provided for them here, than of what he has prepared for them hereafter. Here and there some devoted spirit stands forth as a brilliant luminary, to which the mass of Christians are content to point as an evidence of the power of religion. But why may not every Christian be a saint, consecrated, body, soul and spirit to the Lord. Is it from any deficiency in the gospel, or any respect of persons with God? or is it not rather our want of faith? Do we not as often find *religion exemplified in the life of a poor Saráh*, as in that of our ablest theologians? rather do we not see its brightest exemplification where there is least to interrupt a simple trust in God?

When we speak of Christian perfection, if we would keep distinctly in mind the *two senses* in which the word perfection is commonly used, I think there would be less disagreement among Christians about it. Let us illustrate this by referring to the world of nature. We know that our first solicitude for the new

born infant is to ascertain whether it be a *perfect* child; by which we mean that perfection of our nature which we as truly possess the first hour of our existence as at any subsequent period, a perfection which is the *foundation*, not the *product* of education. But how far shall these powers be trained before they reach the perfection of cultivation? or who would dare pretend that he had reached that point? So far from admitting that a perfection of this kind is attainable, we regard it as the highest perfection of human nature that it is capable of endless progression.

True the babe in Christ may know as little of the nature of the new life upon which he has entered, as the infant knows of natural life, and, being ignorant of his principles, he will stand in equal need of the nurturing hand of some father or mother in Israel.

The living principle is, in its infancy, opposed by a crowd of passions and appetites which have become powerful through long indulgence, and which, together with an enticing world, and the wiles of a still more subtle enemy, render it very difficult to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Yet Christ has anticipated and provided for every exigency of our being, if we but *abide in him*. He has furnished us with armor, in the use of which we may become more than conquerors over every foe. So that we may well inquire, Who is he that can harm us, if we be followers of that which is good? If God be for us, who can be against us?

If, then, we can never thank ourselves for the symmetry of our body, however carefully it may be preserved, but are blamed if through our negligence it become injured; so if we have all grace and abound, no praise is due to us. But if, through neglect of any appointed means, we become again entangled in the yoke of bondage, the sin lies at our own door. Let as much attention be given to the maintenance of a simple life of faith in Christ, as is bestowed on our bodies, in order to keep them in the best condition for cultivating our various physical and mental powers, and let this be extended, as in the other case, through life, and what attainments might we not hope to make in knowledge and true holiness.

But at what point should we have attained the perfection of cultivation? Can we not all, with united heart and voice, bless God that he has placed no such point in the way of our endless progression, but that as the ages of eternity roll on, we shall ever be approximating more and more his own approachable holiness?

We are accused of placing the standard of religion too low, when we bring God's requirements within the reach of our ability, and are told that God could demand of us nothing less than to be holy as he is holy, as if God had instituted no laws for the progression of his creatures in holiness, but required them at once to gain an eminence, which, in the very nature of things, it was impossible for them ever to occupy. What would be thought of the teacher who should require his unlearned pupil at once to fathom the mind of Newton, and should think it lowering his standard of scholarship to make any requirement less than this? And yet, who would place Newton's attainments as the summit of human ability? or say that this teacher required all that his pupil could possibly do? Do we not expect men to be better acquainted with the laws of mind? and should we not think that teacher much wiser who should take his scholar back to principles with which he was perfectly familiar, and let him advance no faster than his mind should be able to comprehend the truth of each deduction, making the scholar's ability the measure of his requirements?

And does not our Heavenly Father make our capability the measure of his demands! *And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.* When the command is brought thus within our reach, conscience cannot be satisfied till it be obeyed, and the sinner, all weakness in himself, is driven to Christ for strength. Faith lays hold on those blessed promises, by which God has pledged himself to write his law in our inward parts, and to circumcise our hearts to love him with all our soul. But we cannot love him with all the soul, without using every means in our power to ascertain what he would have us to do. Love will make us as anxious to know, as ready to obey his will. Our hearts will thus become enlarged, and we shall run in the way of his commandments.

Is not the case very different when we look at the command of God as beyond our reach. We may exert our own powers as much, and may be as much grieved at our poor success, but conscience never being able to say it must be done, we are not forced out of ourselves into Christ. Surely Jesus is not only the *door*, but the *way*. Yes, not one step can we take out of him. He is the high-way of holiness;—blessed are all they who walk therein.

Yours in a precious Savior,

March 15, 1844.

R. B.

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